

OPINION

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Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts

“Prof Asen Diamandiev”

Regarding dissertation work for awarding educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in Higher education field 8. *Arts*, Professional field 8.3. *Music and Dance Art*, doctoral program Musicology and Music Art.

Author: Denitsa Dimitrova Vasileva

Topic: The Bulgarian folk song and its contemporary interpretation

Academic supervisor: Prof Kostadin Buradzhiev

General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral candidate

By order № RD27 - 097 of 20.12.2021 of the Rector of AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev” I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury to supervise a procedure for the defense of a dissertation work on topic “The Bulgarian folk song and its contemporary interpretation” authored by Denitsa Dimitrova Vasileva, for obtaining educational and scientific degree “doctor” in Higher education field Arts, Professional field 8.3 Music and dance. The author of the dissertation is Denitsa Vasileva – full-time doctoral student at the Department of Music Folklore, AMDFA “Prof Asen Diamandiev”. She has presented a set of documents (on paper and on magnetic media) related to the procedure for the defense of the dissertation, as well as 3 publications related to the topic of the dissertation. I have no remarks on the submitted documents and materials.

Denitsa Vasileva is a talented young performer and pedagogue. I had the opportunity to follow her development from her first days on the student bench until now. The serious theoretical and practical foundations preceding the years of work on her dissertation, her diverse interests and creative experiments in the field of folk singing and its various genre interweaving, are a serious prerequisite for empirical accumulations supporting this research. Her various professional activities - as a teacher of folk singing at National School of Music and Dance “Dobrin Petkov” and the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, soloist of the folk formations Folk Line and Nazdrave, host of a folklore show, choir of Academy Folk Choir – and the detailed look into the discussed problems reveal a long-standing interest in the topic of the dissertation.

Relevance of the topic

Indeed, the relevance of the present work is determined by the continuous “*development of the folk song in its new stage incarnation, giving impetus to the general evolutionary processes*” [p. 110], as

candidate puts it. Until now the Bulgarian musicology has not exhausted in theoretical and analytical terms the topic of the interpretations of folk songs, much less the modern genre diversity in their transformation. Through the theoretical development, practically beautifully illustrated with the six concerts, which are part of the doctoral studies, Denitsa Vasileva manages to prove the need to present and study current contemporary manifestations of vocal solo folklore performance. The relevance of the theoretical research is complemented by the fact that the candidate is an active and experimental performer, presenting personally tested in modern music practice searches and responses to audience preferences.

Knowledge of the problem, characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and contributions

I fully agree with the doctoral candidate that *“this scientific research is an attempt to trace the way in which the folk song changes its original image. The stated reasons and factors discussed in the work do not exhaust all aspects of its development. Nevertheless, they have a decisive role in the evolutionary processes of our song folklore”* [p. 112]. It is impossible to cover all aspects of the evolution of folk song in one scientific study, but the logical consistency and interconnectedness that Denitsa Vasileva finds between the primary improvisation of the “lamenters” (among other things, this is a very apt term, introduced by her) and the freedom of performance inherent to jazz.

Chapter One convincingly presents some positions of the doctoral student, very skillfully following the line of themes, such as the fact that the authentic songs recorded in collections and archives are a fixed image of the ancient interpretation of folk songs; that the classification of the Bulgarian folk songs is essentially a theoretical interpretation of the performer's authenticity; that laments are the authentic form of modern improvisation; that regardless of its conservative nature, in reality the melody of the folk song is its most adaptive element in modern times. The topics of the sections are developed with a non-standard view, which contributes to the value of the work.

In each section of the dissertation the deep theoretical and practical-applied knowledge of Denitsa Vasileva on the research object is evident. The Second Chapter contributes to tracing the processes of evolution of the folk song with factual information collected from numerous sources and systematized by certain features. It proves the position that the Radio is a serious factor in transforming the folk music; that the institutions working for the preservation of folklore are in fact a kind of an engine in the evolutionary processes; that schools are the mediator between authenticity and modernity. It presents a summary of the careers of nine renowned performers from the middle of the 20th century and their contribution to the development of the folk song, which in Chapter Three continues with eight more big names from the next period. *“They create original songs based on folklore or transform forgotten and unknown songs. They borrow parts of old, authentic songs, add their own lyrics and ornaments, new intervals and melodic moves, and in some cases invent the lyrics and melody of the song themselves”* [p. 92], states the author and examines the contribution of the wedding orchestras and complements the overall study with the latest trends in vocal folklore performance.

The dissertation *The Bulgarian Folk Song and its Contemporary Interpretation* provides an opportunity for further theoretical study in this ever-changing direction. The bibliography of the used literature contains a relatively large number of diverse sources (79), used as the basis for the candidate's arguments. The scientific merits of the work are combined with a clear and readable style of expression. The objectives set at the beginning of the dissertation are achieved. The contributions are formulated correctly and without undue self-promotion. Among the most valuable contributions of the dissertation I would name its attempt to summarize the contribution of the individual singers for the overall development of folk song.

Assessment of the publications, author's abstract and the personal contribution of the candidate

The candidate presents 3 publications on the topic of the dissertation, which covers the requirements for artistic and creative doctoral studies. The works are copyrighted and have been published in refereed journals. They offer some of the theoretical statements clarified in detail in the dissertation, concerning the modern interpretation of the Bulgarian folk song. The abstract consists of 50 pages and accurately and clearly presents the entire scientific work in a synthesized but comprehensive form. Based on the reviewed documentation, scientific publications, dissertation and abstract, I believe that the research in this paper is entirely the work of the doctoral candidate and we can assume with certainty that the dissertation of Denitsa Vasileva is her own personal work.

Recommendations for future use of the dissertation contributions and results

I would recommend this research work to be officially published with a CD attached to the book with the already realized concert illustrations of the various aspects of the contemporary interpretation of a folk song considered in the study.

Conclusion

As part of her studies, the doctoral candidate has carried out a significant amount of research and scientific work. In addition to the high level of concerts, practically illustrating the topic, a large amount of theoretical material was synthesized, on which original results and contributions to Bulgarian musicology were obtained. The dissertation shows that the doctoral student Denitsa Vasileva has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty Musical Art by demonstrating qualities and skills for independent research. In the presented work there are scientific results that represent a contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff in Republic of Bulgaria /LDASRB/, the Regulation for its implementation, and the Rules of AMDFA "Asen Diamandive". The presented materials and dissertation results fully comply with the specific requirements of the Faculty of Music Folklore and Choreography, adopted in connection with the Regulations of AMDFA for application of LDASRB. Considering the above, I confidently give my positive assessment of the scientific work presented in the dissertation, abstract, results and contributions, and I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the

educational and scientific degree Doctor to Denitsa Vasileva in Higher education field 8. *Arts*, Professional field 8.3. *Music and Dance Art*.

I congratulate Denitsa Vasileva for the serious and in-depth artistic and scientific development. I also congratulate her academic supervisor Prof Kostadin Buradzhiev for the successful guidance and the achievement of the impressive end result.

10.01.2022

Prepared by:

(Assoc. Prof Rada Slavinska)